

Chapter VII

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL

Army Field Forces had proposed even before the outbreak of the Korean conflict that the Army assume the complete training of Army aviators. In late July 1950, OCAFF broadened its proposal to include the training of aviators, helicopter pilots, airplane and engine mechanics, and rotary wing mechanics at the Artillery School.

In August, General Clark wrote to the Chief of Staff of the Army regarding the necessity for immediate expansion of training facilities for Army aviation personnel. He pointed out that the Department of the Army was responsible for training which was peculiar to the Army, but did not have direct control over the primary flight training and mechanic training then being conducted for it by the Air Force. The training of Army personnel was of primary importance to the Army, but was only of tertiary importance to the Air Force. The best training equipment and facilities and the best instructors were utilized within the Air Force for other purposes. General Clark pointed out the savings which would result from the consolidation of all training under Army jurisdiction and requested that the phasing out of Air Force training be studied. The opposition of the Air Force to any plan to expand Army aviation prevented action from being taken on this proposal at the time.¹

Planning for Expansion

Despite the Air Force opposition, the Army continued to consider the question of consolidating all aviation training. In the following months, the rapid expansion of Army aviation in response to the requirements of the war emphasized the need for such a consolidation. In October 1951, the Army Field Forces prepared a study to determine the best method to expand existing facilities for the training of aviation personnel to meet current and anticipated requirements. It pointed out that in the past few months the student load in aviation courses at the Artillery School had increased from a peak of 45 in residence to 378—a jump of 800 percent. This load was designed to provide an output of approximately 1,200 per year. If fiscal year 1952 requirements proposed by the Department of the Army were to be met, the output would be doubled, and the student load would increase accordingly. Transfer of training responsibilities from the Air Force, as had been proposed in August 1950, would more than triple the training load for fiscal

year 1952. With the formation of helicopter medical evacuation units the training load would soar still higher. Assuming an attrition rate as low as 10 percent, the requirements for the Active Army, plus Reserve Components, should not fall below 1,000 per year.

Maximum conservation of facilities, OCAFF believed, would be realized only if all courses in aviation were closely related to one another. Fixed wing and rotary wing mechanic training should be conducted where pilot training was conducted which would allow the same aircraft to be used in both programs. Classes could be integrated in common subjects and overhead requirements for maintenance reduced. OCAFF stated that the facilities at Fort Sill already were overtaxed and proposed the transfer of a portion of the aviation courses to Fort Riley. It therefore recommended that an Army Aviation School be established at Fort Sill with a helicopter branch at Fort Riley. On 14 December 1951, OCAFF submitted this proposal to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Department of the Army, and recommended the steps necessary to implement the establishment of the Army Aviation School.²

On 23 January 1952, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Administration, Department of the Army, approved for planning purposes the establishment of an Army Aviation School. During the period, 18-20 March, the Department of the Army held a conference, which included representatives of all interested Army agencies, on the training of aviation personnel.

The objectives of the Army aviation program, as presented by the Department of the Army G-3 to the conference, were 3,000 fixed wing pilots, 1,053 helicopter pilots, and 340 Transportation Corps helicopter pilots for the ten transportation helicopter companies. There also was a requirement for 2,400 fixed wing mechanics, 912 rotary wing mechanics, and 490 Transportation Corps mechanics for the helicopter companies. Fort Sill at that time was producing 66 fixed wing pilots per month, 20 helicopter pilots per month, 40 Transportation Corps pilots every five months, and 50 Transportation Corps mechanics every four months. The Air Force primary flight training was producing 75 fixed wing and 22 rotary wing pilots per month and 36 fixed wing and 8 helicopter mechanics per week. The Department of the Army placed the numbers of aviation personnel required to be trained above those estimated to be on hand on 1 July 1952 as 1,764 fixed wing and helicopter pilots, 104 cargo helicopter pilots, 2,076 fixed wing mechanics, 384 utility helicopter mechanics, and 75 cargo helicopter mechanics.

Having defined the problem, the Department of the Army G-3 then discussed the organization of an Army Aviation School which would train the pilots and mechanics for all of the branches authorized aviation, with all branches represented on the staff, faculty, and academic board. The representatives from Fort Sill and Fort Riley were requested to comment on the command relationships and administrative channels of an Army Aviation School as proposed by Army Field Forces. It quickly became apparent that everyone agreed that the Army should assume all aviation training and that the establishment of a school was desirable, but there was considerable divergence of opinion as to the location and command relations of the school.

The representatives of the Commanding General of the Artillery Center stated that the location of the school was incidental, but the artillery as a primary user should retain a strong influence over the programs. There was no objection to moving helicopter training to Fort Riley

provided some helicopters remained at Fort Sill for tactical use, training, and development of doctrine. The representatives from Fort Riley and Fifth Army believed that Fort Riley was suitable for helicopter training, but did not believe that it should be a branch of a school at Fort Sill. They proposed that a helicopter school be established at Fort Riley under the commandant of the Army General School, also located at that post. The administrative problems resulting from the split in the school between Fourth and Fifth Armies also were indicated.

The representatives of the Chief of Ordnance stated that the Ordnance Corps desired to maintain operational control of Ordnance aircraft maintenance training whether it was established as a branch of the Army Aviation School or not. The Department of the Army G-1 representative stated that additional officer and civilian space authorizations were not available, and if training rates were increased adjustments within Fourth Army authorizations would be required.

A proposed plan for the transfer of training from the Air Force to the Army was presented. There were no objections to this plan provided personnel, facilities, and funds were made available. The representatives were requested to present requirements under six alternative plans.³

The Artillery School submitted its recommendations for personnel, materiel, facilities, and funds to OCAFF on 17 June. It recommended that the Army Aviation School be established at Fort Sill, or at some other single appropriate post, and that no further consideration be given to the establishment of a separate helicopter branch. On 9 July, OCAFF forwarded to the Department of the Army detailed data showing requirements for personnel, materiel, facilities, and funds for an Army Aviation School to handle the combined Army and Air Force training load.

The information supplied by OCAFF applied to three alternatives: a school located partly at Fort Sill and partly at Fort Riley; a single school located at Fort Sill; and a single school at a location other than Fort Sill. A single school located at Fort Sill would require some 200 fewer people than a school at two locations, and from 200 to 1,100 fewer personnel than a combined school at a location other than Fort Sill. A single school at Fort Sill would require \$879,600 for construction; a single school at another location would require in excess of \$2,500,000; and a school split between Forts Sill and Riley would require \$1,033,500. Other costs—conversion of buildings, training aids, annual operating costs, and civilian personnel—would be about the same for each plan.⁴

The planning conducted during the early part of 1952 gave principal emphasis to plans based on the existing division of responsibility for Army aviation training. During the summer of 1952, however, it was realized that budgetary requests for construction or conversion of facilities, or the activation of installations, were difficult to justify if the long range training loads were not known.

The Department of the Army generally recognized that considerable overlapping and unnecessary expense was involved in conducting preliminary training of Army pilots and mechanics by the Air Force at San Marcos, followed by additional training by the Army at Fort Sill. The Army was still desirous of having all Army aviation training conducted by the Army.

By August 1952, designation of Fort Riley as a location for part of the activities of an Army Aviation School based on Fort Sill was no longer seriously considered. It was realized that a split school with elements in two different army areas would result in command and administrative difficulties. The principal merit in consideration of Fort Riley was that it met the requirement that an Army installation already in being must be named for budgetary planning purposes. For tentative budgetary planning, it was necessary to identify construction or building conversion items that would be needed for an Army Aviation School with an existing Army installation.

At this time, OCAFF was giving serious consideration to a plan under which Frederick Airfield, at Frederick, Oklahoma, located some forty miles from Fort Sill, would be acquired from the Air Force and operated as a subpost of Fort Sill to accommodate part of the activities of the Army Aviation School under Department of the Army policy, a request for activation of Frederick Airfield would have to be presented before funds for its rehabilitation and for necessary construction could be requested of Congress.

On 19 June, the Chief of Staff of the Army recommended to the Secretary of the Army that all training of Army aviation personnel be transferred to the Army. The Materiel Requirements Review Panel, which included among its deliberations the equipment requirements for Army aviation training, also recommended the training of all Army aviation personnel by the Army. The recommendations of the Materiel Requirements Review Panel were approved by Secretary of the Army on 26 October 1952.⁵

On 26 September, as a fresh approach to the problem of the most suitable location for the proposed school, a Site Committee for the Army Aviation School was appointed by the Chief of Army Field Forces.⁶ The mission of this committee was to develop a plan, and one or more alternate plans, for the location of the Army Aviation School. The committee also was directed to study training requirements of the school and make a ground survey of potential sites.

After conducting an on-site survey of seventeen installations ranging across the southern part of the United States, the committee prepared three plans for establishment of the school. Plan I called for the location of the main part of the school at Fort Sill and a part at Frederick. This plan proposed the acquisition by the Army of Frederick Airfield, a former World War II installation of the Army Air Forces but currently under municipal operation, and the conduct of rotary wing training at that location. Plan II called for the acquisition of San Marcos Air Force Base and its auxiliary fields for Army use, with all pilot and mechanic training to be conducted there. Plan III called for location of the school in its entirety at Fort Sill which would be the site of all Army aviation training. The committee recommended approval of Plan I.

The Army Field Forces forwarded the report of the Site Committee to the Department of the Army on 6 October with a recommendation to adopt Plan I. Acquisition of Frederick was at this time felt to be mandatory for the handling of the expected fiscal year 1954 training load, whether or not the Army took over that part of the training conducted by the Air Force.⁷

Little of further significance with reference to establishment of the school developed at the OCAFF level during the remaining weeks of 1952. During the latter part of December, in response to a request from the Organization and Training Division, G-3, Department of the

Army, OCAFF developed a phased plan for implementing the assumption by the Army of responsibility for the training of all Army aviation personnel. OCAFF's plan consisted principally of a timetable for the transfer of Army aviation courses conducted by the Air Force to the proposed Army Aviation School. OCAFF estimated that the integration of this training into the Army Aviation School programs could begin four months after the school received the required spaces and personnel and could be completed within twelve months.⁸

Establishment of the Army Aviation School

The Army Aviation School was established on 16 January 1953 at Fort Sill by Department of the Army General Order Number 9. The mission of the school was to instruct and train officers, warrant officers, and enlisted men of all components of the Army in the duties of Army aviation personnel and in the employment of Army aviation by the various branches in which it was authorized. The school was to develop and standardize the instruction and training of officers, warrant officers, and enlisted men in techniques and tactics relating to Army aviation. It also was to develop and prepare Army aviation doctrine, techniques, and tactics for dissemination to the Armed Forces. The school would assist in the development of Army aviation extension literature and other special training publications. In addition, the school would maintain liaison with other military schools and agencies and disseminate information pertaining to instruction and training methods and materials developed at the Army Aviation School to the Armed Forces.

In order that the school would have the appropriate proportions of representatives of all branches authorized Army aircraft, Army Field Forces had recommended in July 1952 that the branch representation on the staff and faculty be 33 percent for artillery, 25 percent for infantry, 12 percent for armor, 9 percent for transportation, 8 percent for ordnance, 6 percent for engineers and signal, and 1 percent for medical.

The proposed table of distribution (TD) for the Army Aviation School submitted in March 1953 amounted to 294 officers, 5 warrant officers, 535 enlisted men, and 150 civilians. In approving the proposed TD and authorization for additional spaces, Army Field Forces recommended that, in view of the relatively short time remaining before the beginning of fiscal year 1954 and because many of the classes would begin on or about 1 July, authority be granted to Fourth Army to begin requisitioning personnel against the proposed document up to 75 percent of the recommended strength prior to review and approval of the TD.

The Department of the Army on 19 June advised OCAFF that the requested increase in Fourth Army's space authorization to fill the Army Aviation School TD had been approved, except for the space for an aide to the school commandant. And under the existing strict limitations on the number of authorized general officers, the grade of brigadier general for the commandant could not be supported, and the position had been downgraded to colonel.

The Army Aviation School during the initial months of its operation was, for all practical purposes, a separate school in name only. Courses already in progress or scheduled for presentation in the early months of 1953 by the Air Training Department of the Artillery School

were continued as scheduled. The school began operation with the 69 officers, 128 enlisted men, and 1 civilian allotted to the Air Training Department of the Artillery School.

Authority for complete separation of the Army Aviation School from the Artillery School was granted by the Department of the Army on 1 June 1953, to become effective on 1 July. Separation was accomplished in accordance with a detailed plan submitted to Fourth Army by the Artillery Center on 27 March. This plan included provision for transfer of all responsibilities for the training of Army aviation personnel for the Artillery School to the Army Aviation School, discontinuance of the Artillery School's Department of Air Training, submission of academic reports on Army aviation students by the Army Aviation School, separation of fiscal matters as of the beginning of fiscal year 1954, and operation of the Army Aviation School under its own table of distribution and table of allowances. Budget estimates pending before Congress at the end of fiscal year 1953 provided for funds in the amount of \$699,000 for operation of the school during the coming fiscal year.⁹

Organization of the School

The organization of the Army Aviation School was to be prescribed by the Commandant pursuant to policies established by the Department of the Army, Army Field Forces, and Fourth Army. The Assistant Commandant was in charge of the administration of instruction of the school and had general charge of the preparation and publication of text and reference books. The Secretary supervised correspondence and other administrative matters pertaining to the school, was custodian of the school records, acted as agent officer for disbursement of school funds, and served as executive officer for the Commandant and Assistant Commandant.

Responsibilities of the Materiel and Services Staff Section included the operation of the school supply, supervision of aircraft maintenance performed by civilian contract personnel, supervision of operation and maintenance of motor vehicular transportation and parachute maintenance coordination, assistance to the post engineer in maintenance of airfields and landing strips, and coordination with the post engineer in maintenance of buildings and utilities of the school.

The Operations Staff Section operated Post Field and supervised the operation of stage fields, as well as preparing, planning, and scheduling all programs of instruction. It also coordinated courses of instruction with school facilities and transportation, revised aviation procedures and courses of instruction, and coordinated and evaluated the grading plan and academic evaluation programs. The Flight Surgeon of the Army Aviation School was directly responsible to the Commandant for enforcement of all flight regulations and prepared literature on flying safety, conducted accident reports, and reviewed all reports of accident boards.

All flight training was to be conducted by the Department of Flight which also conducted a flight course for instructors to standardize methods and instruction. The instruction pertaining to the maintenance of all types of aircraft was conducted by the Department of Aviation Maintenance, while the Department of Tactics and General Subjects conducted instruction in the tactics and employment of all types of Army aircraft and also conducted administrative

instruction pertaining to employment of Army aviation. It was responsible for the coordination of the study of doctrine and procedures as they affected tactics, techniques, organization, logistics, and equipment in Army aviation and the maintenance of liaison between the school and other agencies. The Department of Tactics and General Subjects also edited material prepared for publication by various departments and staff sections of the school.

The First Year of Operation

Class Schedules

During its first six months of operation, the Army Aviation School graduated 478 officers and warrant officers and 259 enlisted men. Courses and their length and output were as follows:

Officer and WO Courses	Length	Graduates
Army Aviation Tactics	12 wks	285
Army Helicopter Aviation Tactics	5 wks	136
Twin Engine Transition Flight Training	2 wks	49
Helicopter Transport Pilot Training	19 wks	8
Enlisted Courses		
Army Helicopter Transport Maintenance	16 wks	128
Helicopter Mechanic, Transition	1 wk	30
Twin Engine Transition Maintenance	2 wks	76
Helicopter Transport Pilot Training	19 wks	25

In addition to the personnel completing various types of training at the Army Aviation School, several hundred individuals received training in courses conducted by the Air Force at San Marcos. These courses, which were prerequisites for training of similar types at Fort Sill, were: Army Field Forces Helicopter Pilot Training, Officer—5 weeks; Liaison Pilot Training—18 weeks; Liaison Airplane and Engine Maintenance—15 weeks; and Rotary Wing Mechanic, H-13—6 weeks. Additional Army aviation personnel received training in officer aircraft maintenance and airframe mechanics conducted under contract by the Spartan School of Aeronautics.¹⁰

In addition to the previously mentioned courses, certain short-term special purpose courses were given during fiscal year 1953 which included a Twin Engine Transition Flight Training—a 2-week course with 114 enrolled; Twin Engine Transition Maintenance Training—a 2-week course with 117 enrolled; Army Helicopter Mechanic Transition Maintenance Training, H-23—1-week in duration with 130 enrolled; and Army Helicopter Mechanic Transition Maintenance Training—2 weeks in length with 130 in attendance.

As a result of an Army decision to qualify its pilots for instrument flying by a military course instead of through instruction provided under contract by civilian agencies, an Army Aviation Instrument Training Course of eight weeks with an input of 140 students was scheduled for presentation during fiscal year 1954. Also scheduled was a 4-week Army Instrument Examiner Course which had a student input of sixty-five.

During FY 1954, the Air Force would conduct the 17-week Army Primary Flight Training Course for 1,300 men, the 5-week Army Field Forces Helicopter Pilot Training Course for 460 men, the 12-week Army Helicopter Mechanic Course for 1,440 men, and the 11-week Army Airplane Mechanic Course for 2,160 men—all at Gary Air Force Base. The input of 1,300 students to the Army Primary Flight Training Course was based on the requirement of the Army to train 975 Army aviators with an allowance for a 25 percent attrition during the training period. The Army Field Forces had expanded the Army Helicopter Mechanic Course for FY 1954 from seven to twelve weeks. Originally, it had been intended to qualify airplane mechanics as helicopter mechanics; the revised course was to be a complete maintenance course not requiring prior training as an airplane or engine mechanic.¹¹

Estimated Training Requirements

In late October 1952, the Army Field Forces submitted estimated training requirements for Army aviation personnel at San Marcos and the Artillery School for fiscal years 1953 through 1957. Computation of the fiscal year 1954 Instrument Flight Course requirements was based on the 657 trained under civilian contract during fiscal year 1952 and 1,000 programed to be trained for fiscal year 1953—a total of 1,657. The estimated requirement for the Instrument Flight Examiner Course was ninety-six. The requirement for the Cargo Helicopter Pilot Course, which would provide pilots for the transportation helicopter companies and the medical service helicopter evacuation detachments, was fixed at 384. The requirement for the Utility Helicopter Pilot Course was set at thirty-two, while the requirement for the Airframe Mechanic Course was seventy. For the Cargo Helicopter Mechanic Course, which provided helicopter mechanics for transportation helicopter companies, medical service evacuation detachments, and helicopter repair detachments, the requirement was set at 501.

The Department of the Army on 19 January 1953 approved these requirements with certain exceptions. It insisted that the input of fixed wing pilots remain at 100 per month through fiscal year 1955, but could be reduced to the figures indicated for fiscal years 1956 and 1957. Because of the critical shortage the training of airplane and engine mechanics should remain at 144 per month through fiscal year 1955.

The Department of the Army announced that procurement plans for cargo helicopters were then being formulated for submission to the Chief of Staff of the Army. The training rates for cargo helicopter pilots and mechanics would have to be based on the delivery dates for cargo helicopters. When firm procurement plans were approved, the forecast production schedule for cargo helicopters would be forwarded to Army Field Forces to permit the computation of more accurate training requirements. According to the Department of the Army, a review of procurement plans and production schedules indicated that the proposed training rates would be more than adequate to fill requirements.

The Department of the Army also was considering a request for additional MOSs for aviation maintenance personnel. No funds were included in the fiscal year 1954 budget for a continuation of the training of aircraft maintenance officers and airframe mechanics in civilian schools. Upon

receipt of decisions on MOSs and transfer of training from the Air Force, maintenance courses would have to be reviewed to determine the number and type of course to be conducted by the Army Aviation School. In order that the required revision of courses and adjustments in training rates could be accomplished, the Army Field Forces was to be advised when decisions would be made on MOSs and transfer of training from the Air Force to the Army.¹²

The Department of the Army called a conference on 29 December 1952 to discuss the effect of the mechanic shortage on the training program for Army aviation and the integration of Air Force training of Army personnel into an Army Aviation School program. A shortage of helicopter mechanics caused the postponement of a transportation helicopter pilot class from 5 December 1952 to 5 January 1953, which disrupted the sequence of classes for the remainder of the fiscal year. In order to meet the scheduled training requirements, 120 helicopter mechanics would be required for January, 220 in February, and 325 in March. Fourth Army advised the Department of Air Training that ten additional mechanics would be assigned in January and thirty in February. The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Department of the Army, indicated that no action would be taken to freeze personnel then assigned to the Army Aviation School. Forecast losses would equal the additional mechanics promised, and there was no source which could furnish military helicopter mechanics in the number needed. The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, Department of the Army, sent representatives to Fort Sill in early January 1953 to confer with the school and Fourth Army representatives and determine a solution to the maintenance problem. Utilization of civilian mechanics or a contract with a civilian firm for maintenance of the helicopters was thought to be the best solution, and the G-4 estimated that civilian maintenance assistance could be made available in February. The G-3 informally accepted the concept that some reduction in training during calendar year 1954 should be made to ease the problems of Army assumption of present Air Force training.¹³

Suspension of Transfer of Air Force Training

Student load forecasts for fiscal year 1954 at both the Army Aviation School and San Marcos indicated substantial increases in the training requirements for Army aviation personnel over the previous year. Army Field Forces planning to meet these needs was hampered by the unwarranted assumptions that the Army would assume responsibility for all training of Army aviation personnel by January 1954, that Frederick Airfield would be released to the Army by the Air Force by 15 March 1953, and that the Army Aviation School at Fort Sill would utilize Frederick, with its satellite fields, as a sub-post.

The Army Field Forces on 12 March emphasized the need for acquisition of Frederick Airfield, but received word from the Department of the Army a few days later that Frederick would not be available for Army use in the immediate future. Then on 19 May, the Department advised OCAFF that, because of budget limitations, plans to reactivate Frederick Airfield as an Air Force base had been suspended. This decision necessitated the suspension of any immediate plans for the Army to assume responsibility for the training of Army aviation personnel then being conducted by the Air Force. In addition to the financial problems, the Air Force in

February had reversed its position regarding the transfer of training, and the entire problem was unsettled.¹⁴

Duplication of Training Activities

Maj. Gen. Charles E. Hart, commanding general of the Artillery Center, reported to Army Field Forces in February 1954 that there was a duplication of training activities between the Helicopter Mechanic Course being conducted by the Army Aviation School and a similar course being conducted exclusively for Army personnel by the Air Force at Gary Air Force Base. Attempts to resolve the duplication had been made at all levels to no avail. General Hart also complained that the fixed wing aircraft mechanics were being trained at Gary Air Force Base instead of Fort Sill. Division of responsibility, according to General Hart, produced difficulty in coordination, control, and direction of effort. The introduction of any changes in the curriculum or equipment in the basic training portion required approval at several levels within each service up to and including departmental headquarters. The compartmentalized nature of the two phases of the training program precluded concurrent and integrated training in both the technical and tactical aspects. If the two phases were merged, an actual saving of training time could be realized. General Hart recommended that the full responsibility for the training of all Army aviation personnel be assigned to the Department of the Army, a move which would result in a more effective, more efficient, and better coordinated training program; improve the quality of instruction and its direct application to Army needs; eliminate unnecessary duplication in facilities and service support; and assure a more effective and broader mobilization base for Army aviator training.¹⁵

Lt. Gen. John E. Dahlquist, the Chief of Army Field Forces, concurred that the Army should control this training and had made his feelings known to the Department of the Army in August and December 1953. The G-3, Department of the Army, had recommended to the Secretary of the Army that this training be transferred starting in fiscal year 1956, but by the end of 1954 the problem was still unresolved.¹⁶

Shortage of Fixed Wing Pilots

In May 1954, the Department of the Army completed a study on the status of Army aviators which showed that there were 2,282 aviators on active duty, 867 of whom were on assignments not involving the piloting of aircraft as a primary duty. This meant that there were 1,415 pilots to fly 2,300 aircraft issued against TOE and TA authorizations. The critical shortage of Army aviators had to be alleviated at the earliest practicable date. A study by the Office of the Comptroller of the Army had indicated that the gain in pilot strength during the period of June 1953 through February 1954 was less than 100. The actual pilot strength did not follow the anticipated pilot strength because the elimination rate during primary training was nearer 40 percent than the projected 25 percent. Moreover, classes did not begin training at full strength and more pilots were released from active duty than anticipated. The input for fixed wing pilot training had to be increased to 200 per month if Army requirements for pilots were to be met by fiscal year 1958.

To alleviate this problem, the Department of the Army requested that OCAFF submit recommendations on the means of doubling the current output of the Army Aviation Tactics Course at Fort Sill. It also queried the Air Force concerning its capability to increase the capacity of the Army Primary Flight Course. In view of the critical shortage of aviation training personnel and facilities, consideration was to be given to the utilization of L-19 aircraft in primary flight training and to reducing by half the length of the Army Aviation Tactics Course.

On 19 July, Army Field Forces reported to the Department of the Army that the shortage of Army aviators could be eliminated in three years by an increase of 1,230 for the first year, which would be less than double the present yearly output of the Army Aviation Tactics Course. This could be accomplished by utilizing the L-19 in primary flight training, reducing the Army Aviation Tactics Course by two weeks, and reducing the Army Cargo Helicopter Pilot Course by one week.¹⁷

Training of Mechanics

At a conference on facilities for Army aviation held on 14 May 1954, the G-3, Department of the Army, announced that he was recommending that all Army aviation maintenance instruction be conducted at the Transportation School at Fort Eustis. At this time, OCAFF informed the Department of the Army that it believed organizational aircraft maintenance instruction should be conducted by the Army Aviation School and that field and depot aircraft maintenance instruction should be conducted by the Transportation School. In the following months, the exact position of the Department of the Army regarding the location of the training of aircraft maintenance personnel became unclear. Late in July, the commandant of the Aviation School strongly recommended that organizational aircraft maintenance training continue to be conducted by his school. OCAFF requested a clarification of Department of the Army policy and was informed that the entire Army aviation program was under examination. Until the completion of this examination late in the year, there would be no changes made in planning for the conduct of organizational aircraft maintenance instruction at the Army Aviation School and field maintenance instruction at the Transportation School.¹⁸

The Transportation Corps obtained an increase in the number of MOSs for Army aircraft maintenance and developed a program for the specialist training at the Transportation School. Under this program, one officer and six enlisted courses were set up, five of which were in specialties new to Army maintenance. Provision was made for specialist training in the repair of major components or systems of aircraft such as rotors and propellers, engines and power trains, airframes, and instruments and electrical systems. Instruction at the Transportation School began in June 1954, and previous arrangements for maintenance training at a civilian institution were discontinued. It was planned to train approximately 1,300 field maintenance personnel in fiscal year 1955.¹⁹

Movement of the Army Aviation School

The rapid growth of the Army Aviation School placed a severe strain on the facilities available at Fort Sill. By August 1954, the staff and faculty of the school had grown to almost 300

members. There were also at Fort Sill approximately 800 students and about 500 aircraft. Such rapid growth resulted in numerous problems and crowded conditions which began to hamper the school's ability to perform its mission. Inadequate hangar space, dispersal of activities, and submarginal facilities resulted in excessive costs and inefficient operations. Insufficient parking hardstands meant that about 80 percent of the aircraft had to be parked on the sod and continuously operated under extremely poor conditions. The sod became a sea of mud when it rained and was dusty when it was dry. Dust circulating through the engines resulted in excessive deterioration and frequent engine replacements. In addition, a lack of hangar space made the aircraft extremely vulnerable to the frequent and severe storms. Over an 11-year period, ending in 1953, storm damage amounted to \$2,161,730 and 39,505 training hours lost. The location of the heliport also posed a problem, due to its encroachment on other training activities at the Artillery School and its proximity to fixed wing traffic at Post Field.

A number of possibilities were considered to relieve the Army Aviation School's problem. The possibility of expanding activities at Fort Sill and utilizing Frederick Airfield as a subpost was explored. Other facilities considered were at Shawnee and El Reno, Oklahoma; Gary Air Force Base; DeRidder Army Field Forces Base, Camp Polk, Louisiana; Stewart Field at Savannah, Georgia; Camp Mackall, North Carolina; Fort Riley, Kansas; Camp Rucker, Alabama; and an abandoned Air Force installation at Childress, Texas. Camp Rucker was chosen primarily because Ozark Army Air Field had three 5,000-foot runways. Buildings had just been renovated at a cost of \$8,000,000. Huge truck stands on the reservation would serve as good heliports, and the large buildings used for truck repair would serve as good rotary wing maintenance hangars.

On 20 July 1954, the Chief of Staff of the Army approved transfer of the Army Aviation School from Fort Sill to Camp Rucker. Three days later, the commandant of the school was directed to work with the commanding generals of Third and Fourth Armies to prepare movement plans by 1 September.

An advance party of fifty men departed for Camp Rucker in late August. Brig. Gen. Carl I. Hutton, who had been commandant of the Army Aviation School since July, departed Fort Sill on 1 September and assumed command of Camp Rucker. The assistant commandant of the school remained at Fort Sill until early in November when he, too, left for Camp Rucker. The move took place with a minimum cancellation of classes, although some smaller courses, which were scheduled consecutively (twin-engine, instrument, and some mechanic classes) were cancelled. The school also was forced to cancel some helicopter courses after problems developed during the move. The first course to get under way at Camp Rucker was a combined Army Aviation Tactics Course. This combined class began training on 18 October and graduated 120 officers on 29 January 1955.²⁰

The Army Aviation School was organized in five departments—Fixed Wing Training, Rotary Wing Training, Aviation Maintenance, Tactics and General Subjects, and Publications and Non-Resident Instruction. Also included were the Army Aviation School Regiment, Combat Development Office, Office of the School Secretary, and Office of the Director of Instruction.

During the first few months of operations at Camp Rucker, flight training began to fall behind schedule. With only Ozark Army Air Field located on post, training was moved to municipal airports near the neighboring towns. Many valuable hours were lost traveling to and from training sites—one was located almost 100 miles away. Soon tactical landing sites were selected on post and flying began from unimproved strips. Within a few weeks the dust created by the prop wash had forced training back to the improved airfields.

On 1 October 1954, 16 of the 250 helicopters used for rotary wing training arrived at Camp Rucker from Fort Sill. The trip took three days with twelve fuel stops along the 855-mile course. It was late October when the first mass movement of helicopters came over the same route. Accompanying each flight was one L-20 airplane and one H-19 or H-25 helicopter which acted as control aircraft and carried extra fuel and maintenance personnel. By mid-October, the newly formed Department of Rotary Wing Training became operational at Camp Rucker.

The Department of Aviation Maintenance began the move on 20 November, and six days later the first maintenance instruction at Camp Rucker began. At this time, the department conducted two courses—the Army Helicopter Maintenance Course and the Twin-Engine Maintenance Course. The move was conducted in phases and completed on 17 December. During the move, one class from each course was cancelled and the first Helicopter Maintenance Course class was scheduled for graduation on 8 January 1955. Due to the enthusiasm of the instructors and students the class was accelerated and graduated before Christmas. Like all segments of the Army Aviation School, the department suffered with inadequate facilities. An old vehicle shop building was used as a classroom, furniture was scarce, heating systems consisted of pot belly stoves, and the department's physical location in relation to classrooms presented transportation problems.

The Department of Tactics and General Subjects began moving from Fort Sill on 9 October. As classes graduated at Fort Sill, the remaining instructors moved to Camp Rucker. Three former classroom buildings provided instructional space. Even though these facilities were inadequate by normal standards, they were the finest the school could offer. The first few months at Camp Rucker were spent selecting training areas for field problems and modifying facilities to meet existing needs.²¹

Endnotes

Chapter VII

1. (1) Ltr AKPSIAT 352.11, Artillery School to CAFF, 26 Jul 50, subj: Flight Training for Army Aviators. (2) Ltr AKPSIAT 352.11, Artillery School to CAFF, 2 Aug 50, subj: Training of Army Aviators and Airplane and Engine Mechanics. (3) Ltr ATTNG-27 353, CAFF to CofSA, 19 Aug 50, subj: Training of Army Aviation Personnel.
2. (1) OCAFF Staff Study, 30 Oct 51. (2) Ltr ATTNG-22 352, OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 14 Dec 51, subj: Establishment of the Army Aviation School.
3. (1) Ltr AGAO-CC 337 The Pentagon (21 Feb 52) G-3, DA to CAFF, 26 Feb 52, subj: Conference on Training of Army Aviation Personnel. (2) Ltr ATTNG-22 352, OCAFF to Artillery School, 25 Apr 52, subj: Establishment of Army Aviation School.
4. 1st Ind ATTNG-22 352, OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 9 Jul 52, to ltr G-3 352 (11 Apr 52), DA ACofS G-3 to CAFF, 11 Apr 52, subj: Establishment of Army Aviation School.
5. OCAFF Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 53, chapter 7.
6. OCAFF LO No. 9-138, 26 Sep 52, subj: Orders.
7. Ltr ATTNG-22 352, OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 6 Oct 52, subj: Location of Army Aviation School.
8. OCAFF Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 53, chapter 7.
9. Ibid., pp. 10-14.
10. OCAFF Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 53, chapter 7.
11. (1) Ltr ATTNG-32-352, OCAFF to Artillery Center, 17 Feb 53, subj: Integration of Present Air Force Training. (2) Ltr ATTNG 352/14, OCAFF to distr, 8 Apr 53, subj: Army Aviation Instrument Training.
12. Ltr ATTNG-22-353(C), OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 27 Oct 52, subj: Training Requirements for Army Aviation, w/1st Ind.
13. Memo, OCAFF G-3 for General Conley, 30 Dec 52, subj: Report of Conference on Army Aviation, 29 Dec 52.
14. (1) Ltr ATTNG-32-352, OCAFF to Artillery Center, 17 Feb 53, subj: Integration of Present Air Force Training into the Army Aviation School. (2) Ltr ATTNG-32-352, OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 12 Mar 53, subj: Army Aviation Training. (3) Ltr ATTNG-32-342 (Army Avn Sch), OCAFF to Artillery Center, 17 Mar 53, subj: Army Aviation Training Program, FY 54, w/1st Ind, DA ACofS G-3 to OCAFF, 19 May 53. (4) Ltr ATTNG-32-352, OCAFF to distr, 1 Jun 53, subj: Schedule of Classes for Instruction, Army Aviation. (5) DF CofS OCAFF to OCAFF G-3, 23 Feb 54, subj: Ltr to Gen Dahlquist, 16 Feb 54, from Maj Gen Charles E. Hart, CG, The Artillery Center, re/ Training Duplication in Aviation Mechanic Courses, Cmt 2, G-3 to CofS, 24 Feb 54.
15. Ltr, Maj Gen Charles E. Hart to Lt Gen John E. Dahlquist, 26 Feb 54.
16. Ltr, Lt Gen John E. Dahlquist to Maj Gen Charles E. Hart, 3 Mar 54.
17. Ltr GS 360 (1 Apr 54), DA ACofS G-3 to CAFF, 6 May 54, subj: Increase in Training of Army Fixed Wing Pilots, w/1st Ind, OCAFF to DA ACofS G-3, 19 Jul 54.
18. Ltr 353 AKPSIAS-OP, Brig Gen Carl I. Hutton to CAFF, 26 Jul 54, subj: Training of Organizational Aircraft Mechanic Personnel.
19. Bykofsky, p. 89.
20. (1) Tierney and Montgomery, *The Army Aviation Story*, pp. 82-86. (2) History of the U.S. Army Aviation Center, Ft Rucker, AL, 1954-1964, pp. 2-3. (3) OCAFF Summary of Major Events and Problems, FY 55, Vol. II, Plans and Operations Div, G-3 Sec., p. 8.
21. U.S. Army Aviation Center History, 1954-1964, pp. 3, 6, 10, 14, 15.